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ABSTRACT

Based on gestalt psychology, guided fantasy is a technique that uses sensory images related to a particular situation to create a subjective understanding of that experience. For the young child, guided fantasy can be a process of creating an inner subjective experience that is subsequently integrated with objective knowledge (language) to produce holistic learning. The method begins with a teacher-directed journey eliciting vivid imagery about an imaginary trip and using vocabulary words which are to be introduced. After the journey is complete, the students share their journey in pairs, verbalizing inner experiences immediately. The children are reminded that words signify the pictures and feelings they had when their eyes were closed. After the immediate sharing of the story, the students write a story that will symbolize the individual experiences each person had. Used as an approach to reading instruction, the fantasy experiences should incorporate target sight vocabulary so that inner journeys can produce a regular and controlled vocabulary. Subsequent fantasy experiences can be constructed to encourage the students to use these same words or other vocabulary words. After the story is recorded, skill development appropriate for each student's level can be created using the language patterns in the story. Starting with a preconceptual experience, fantasy experience allows reading to flow from a dream-like experience into meaningful written communication. A description of the use of a guided fantasy in a classroom is included in the document. (HOD)

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USING GUIDED FANTASY TO TEACH READING

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Rupertsland Regional
Reading Conference (2nd, Regina, Saskatchewan, April 12-14, 1984)

Based in gestalt psychology, guided fantasy is a technique that
uses sensory images related to a particular situation to create a
subjective understanding of that experience. This technique utilizes
the creative, multiple processes of the right-brain. Recent studies
indicate that remedial students scored higher on measures of oral and
written communication, reading, and writing skills when using imagery
involvement. (Galyean, 1981; Pritchard and Taylor, 1978) In addition
to these studies, research has continued to support the
specialization of brain functioning that requires an integration of
two modes of cognition. The left cerebral hemisphere tends to be the
center for linear-sequential thinking. Reading, writing and the
ordering of language processes are embodied in this side of the

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brain. While the right cerebral hemisphere tends to process information simultaneously and intuitively. The right side deals in pictures, metaphors and spatial relationships. Further evidence in brain specialization indicates that the process is developmental in nature. Initially the brain processes information intuitively and simultaneously; however, with the advent of language the verbal labeling of experience increases the use of the logical, analytical processes of the left side and heightens specialization of brain functioning. Thus, young children tend to be more right-brained, holistic and imaginative in their approach to learning. Pearce (1971, p. 56) characterizes the thinking of the young child as a "rich texture of free synthesis" . . . "a non- logical, dream-sequence." Children learn through an intuitive understanding of the world which is later translated into language and abstract knowledge.

Based in the imagination of a young child, guided fantasy or phantasy experience (Walker, 1982) patterns its instructional approach according the thoughts of a young child. It is a process of creating an inner subjective experience that is subsequently integrated with objective knowing (language) to produce holistic learning. The method begins with a teacher-directed journey eliciting vivid imagery about an imaginary trip. After the journey is complete, the students share their journeys in pairs, allowing them to verbalize the inner experience immediately. The children are reminded that words signify the pictures and feelings they had when their eyes were closed. After the immediate sharing of the story,

the students write a story that will symbolize the individual experiences each person had.

Phantasy experience is easy to incorporate into any classroom program. The only resources needed are the creative minds of the students and teacher. Following the few guideline below, the teacher can increase imagery flow and spontaneity.

First, create an atmosphere of multisensory experience. By using other senses, the child can draw upon his imagination more readily. Phrases such as "listen to the sounds" or "feel the room getting colder" help focus the child's mind on various senses. Having the student close his eyes also decreases his reliance on visual stimuli. Next, create the setting and characterize the traveller in the journey. If certain reading vocabulary words are to be introduced, use these as a basis for the phantasy experience. Draw heavily on the rich imaginations of young children. For example:

"Close your eyes and relax in your chair. .
are you comfortable. . . Now listen to the noises
in the room (Sensory-awareness statement) . . . Can
you hear them? . . . Feel the temperature of this
room. . . Is it hot or cold? . . . Now turn the
sounds of this room into the sounds of the meadow
(setting statement) . . . Listen to the sounds of
the meadow. . . What kind of a day is it . .
.Sunny? . . . Cloudy? . . . Hot? . . . Cold? . . .
Imagine that you are a walking on a narrow

pathway toward a distant mountain"

Once the imagery and setting have been evoked, some type of calming action should be presented. This calming statement allows the imagery of the setting to unfold naturally according to the personal experiences of the student.

" . . . The wind is blowing gently on you as
you walk softly down. . down. . . down. . .the
narrow pathway . . .with each step the mountain
is closer . . and closer. . .and closer. . ."

When the student is in a relatively relaxed state, develop the action of the adventure. Unusual and strange actions are often more effective for the young child. The various actions need to be interwoven with calming statements and pauses. Combine the action of the journey with words that create a relaxed, image-making dream-state.

" . . . As you reach the mountain you begin to
climb up . . . up. . .up. . . winding around
the side of the mountain (action statement). .
.through the clouds you climb up . . .up . . .up
(calming statement) . . . As you reach the top of
the mountain, you enter a dark cave where you see
a wise old Indian sitting in front of a fire
(imaging statement)"

Lastly, the phantasy experience is left incomplete so that the student can finish the journey on his own. This personalizes the

story for each student. After finishing the journey, the student is instructed to return to the classroom. Returning to the classroom connects the phantasy with reality.

" . . . As you approach the wise Indian, sit down with him. . He has lived along time and can answer any of your questions, . . Ask him something you want to know about. . .I will leave you here (separation statement) . . .You can finish the journey in your mind. . .When you have finished your journey. . . you may return to the classroom and open your eyes (closing statement)"

The following steps summarize how to conduct the phantasy experience:

Read the phantasy experience in a calm, serene voice.

Use many pauses so the imagery of the journey can flow through the conscious mind of the child.

If possible, dim the lights so the child can close his eyes more readily.

The phantasy experience would be read slowly and looks like the following when read in its entirety.

"Close your eyes and sit comfortably in your chair. . .are you comfortable?. . . Now listen to the noises in the room. . .Can you hear them?. . .Feel the temperature of this room. . .Is it hot or cold?. . .Now turn the sounds of this room into the sounds of the meadow. . .Listen to the

sounds of the meadow. . . What kind of day is it.
. . Sunny?. . . Cloudy?. . . Hot?. . . Cold ?. .
. Imagine that you are walking on a narrow pathway
toward a distant mountain. . The wind is blowing
gently on you as you walk softly down. . down. .
. the narrow pathway. . with each step the
mountain is closer. . and closer. . . and
closer. . As you reach the mountain you begin to
climb. . up. . up . . . up. . winding around
and around the side of the mountain . . over
rocks. . effortlessly through the clouds you
climb up. . up. . up. . As you reach the top
of the mountain. . . you enter a dark cave where
you see a wise old Indian sitting in front of a
fire. . As you approach the wise Indian, sit
down with him. . He has lived along time. . and
can answer any of your questions. . Ask him
something you want to know about. . I will leave
you here. . . You can finish the journey in your
mind. . . When you have finished your journey. .
. you may return to the classroom and open your
eyes."

After completing the journey, young children share their stories orally so that the internal imagery is not lost. This sharing is then followed by writing a group story. The children are reminded that what is written must remind all the students of what happened

when their eyes were closed. This reminder serves to reinforce the concept that written language is a communication of an author's feelings and imaginations through common linguistic symbols. It further reinforces the metacognitive thought that the language system is a means of communicating the inner thoughts of one person to another individual.

Using this phantasy experience, two different groups of twenty-five beginning first graders wrote the following stories. Group I wrote the following story.

The Wise Old Indian

We followed this road. We went up this mountain in the clouds. We went into this cave. We saw a wise old Indian. We asked him how babies came alive. We asked how Indians take down teepees. We asked him how blood moves inside us.

Group II wrote the following short story.

The Wise Old Indian

We were marching to a mountain. We went up a rocky mountain. When we got to the top of the mountain, we took off our shoes at the door of the temple. We saw a wise old Indian. We asked the Indian a question. We asked him what life was about. He said life was about love. The end.

After the dictation, the stories were read simultaneously several times. First, the stories were read as if we were a group of

young children telling the experience to our parents. Then we read the stories as if we were an old wise Indian telling a story of our youth around a fire. Then we read the story as if we were a grandfather sitting in a rocking chair telling stories to our grandchildren. After the numerous group repetitions, each child received a copy of the story to take home to read to their family.

For the purpose of using guided fantasy as an approach to reading instruction, the phantasy experiences are created incorporating target sight vocabulary; thus, similar inner journeys can produce a regular and controlled vocabulary. In this instance the targeted words were mountain, climb, clouds, asked, wise and Indian. The two groups incorporated the following repetitions in their stories.

Targeted words:

	Group I	Group II
mountain	1	3
climb	0	0
clouds	1	0
asked	3	2
wise	2	2
Indian	3	3

Subsequent phantasy experiences can be constructed to encourage the students to use these same words or other vocabulary words. After the story is recorded, skill development appropriate for the student's level can be created using the language patterns in the story. The student develops a chunk bank rather than a word bank,

thus the transfer from private imagery to common linguistic expression begins by maintaining wholeness. The chunk cards from Group I's story would look like the following and initially would be presented in story order:

We followed	this road
we went	up this mountain
in the clouds	We went
into this cave	We saw
a wise old Indian	We asked him
how babies	came alive
We asked	how Indians
take down teepees	We asked him
how blood moves	inside us

Keeping the language in chunks provides the young child with a sense of meaning following his natural patterns of thought and communication. Words and sounds are taught in chunks where private imagery can be evoked and the imagery flow used to elicit a prediction.

Another follow-up exercise can be constructed by deleting the target words from the experience story. Thus, a cloze exercise can be created to increase prediction and word identification. Using group II's story, the exercise would look like the following:

We were marching to a _____. We went up a rocky _____.
 When we got to the top of the _____, we took off our shoes at the
 door of the temple. We saw a _____ old Indian. We _____ the
 _____ a question. We _____ him what life was about. He said

life was about love. The end.

The phantasy experience method of teaching reading engages right-brained, non-linear thinking to develop a meaning which is associated with the holistic experience. The child imagines the whole story in one setting before connecting that meaning with common linguistic symbols (Walker, 1982). Phantasy experience relies on the subjective images of the individual student. The imagery produced during a phantasy experience becomes the unique instantiation of the learner. Starting with the preconceptual experience, phantasy experience allows reading to flow from a dream-like experience into meaningful written communication. Using phantasy experience, learning to read can be a fascinating discovery of the magical imagery associated with the printed word.

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